REMARKS

In the non-final Office Action, dated July 27, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 37-57 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0212666 (hereinafter "BASU").

By way of this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 49 and 50 to improve form. New claims 58-76 have been added. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. Claims 37-76 are currently pending. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejection of claims 37-57 is respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the following remarks.

At the outset, Applicants note that the initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 (submitted with an information disclosure statement (IDS) on December 21, 2006) that was returned with the present Office Action has not been initialed by the Examiner to indicate that all of the references were considered. In particular, the reference cited in the "other documents" section of the form PTO-1449 was not initialed by the Examiner. Applicants request that a new copy of this form PTO-1449 be returned along with the next Office communication with all of the references on this form being initialed as having been considered by the Examiner.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

On page 2, the final Office Action rejects pending claims 37-57 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by BASU. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 37, for example, recites a method that includes receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search

query; broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query; and executing a search using the broadened search query.

A proper rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 requires that a reference teach every aspect of the claimed invention. See M.P.E.P. § 2131. BASU does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in Applicants' claim 37. For example, BASU does not disclose or suggest, among other features, receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query or broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 37.

BASU discloses the receipt of a search query 106 at a query module 202 from a user, where the search query 106 may include a textual query that further includes words, phrases or sentences, or a content query that further includes audio, images, image sequences, video or other spatial or time-series media (paragraph 0032; FIG. 1). A query expansion module 204 then probabilistically expands the received query into multiple sub-queries (paragraphs 0034 and 0041) using an expanding operation 304. For example, the query "beach" may be expanded into the sub-queries "sky," "water," and "sand" (paragraph 0041). The expanding operation 304 assigns a confidence level to each expanded sub-query based on a probabilistic model that indicates a probability that each expanded sub-query is relevant to the received query (paragraphs 0038 and 0041). The confidence level may be used by the system or a user for evaluating the relevance of future query expansion operations (paragraphs 0041 and 0042). Sub-

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query confidence levels associated with expanded sub-queries may be adjusted based on user feedback that indicates the user's evaluation of the relevance of each sub-query to the query (paragraph 0042). For example, if a user indicates that the sub-query "smoke" is not relevant to a "rocket launch" query, then the system may assign a lower probability of relevance to the "smoke" sub-query in future iterations of "rocket launch" queries (paragraph 0038). The user's feedback, thus, serves to define future query expansion operations 304 (paragraph 0043). A processing module 206 then retrieves sub-query results from a database using the expanded sub-queries (paragraph 0036).

BASU, therefore, discloses the expansion of a textual query received from a user into multiple sub-queries based on a system determined probability that the sub-queries are relevant to the query. BASU further discloses that user feedback may be used to adjust probabilities of relevance of given expanded sub-queries to certain queries, thereby impacting future query expansion operations. BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest or even mention that the textual query received from the user includes a user-selected operator associated with one of the search terms of the query. BASU, furthermore, does not disclose, suggest or even mention broadening the one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator. BASU, therefore, does not disclose or suggest the receipt of a search query comprising multiple search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with one of the search terms of the search query, or broadening the one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 37.

In rejecting claim 37, the Office Action specifically relies on paragraphs 0032, 0041 and 0043 of BASU for allegedly disclosing the features of claim 37. These sections of BASU, or any other sections of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of claim 37.

At paragraph 0032, BASU discloses:

> The system 108 includes a query module 202 configured to receive a search query. It is contemplated that the query submitted to the query module 202 may be in the form of a textual query and/or a content query. A textual query is also referred to herein as an abstract exemplar and includes words, phrases, and sentences. Examples of a textual query are the word "sunset" and the phrase "rocket launch". A content query is also referred to herein as a content exemplar and specifies a query which includes, but is not limited to, audio, images, image sequences, video, and other spatial as well as time-series media. Examples of content queries are music clips, digital photographs, real-time surveillance sequences, movie videos, and electrocardiograms. It should be noted that text is excluded from the definition of content exemplars and is treated separately. Thus, a query received by the query module 202 is expected to be in the form of text, content, or a combination of the two.

This section of BASU merely discloses the receipt of a search query at a query module 202, where the search query may include a textual query and/or a content query. The textual query may include words, phrases and sentences. The content query may include a music clip, a digital photograph, a movie video, etc. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose or even suggest the receipt of a search query comprising multiple search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with one of the search terms of the search query, or broadening the one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 37.

At paragraph 0041, BASU discloses:

> In expanding operation 304, the query is expanded to sub-queries, with at least

one sub-query being expanded probabilistically. As discussed above, the present invention may expand a textual exemplar into various textual sub-queries and content sub-queries. As an illustration of such query expansion, consider the query "beach" expanded to the sub-queries "sky", "water", and "sand". This example underlines the probabilistic nature of query expansion in that some images of beaches may not show the sky. Thus, the mapping of "beach" to "sky", "water", and "sand" is probabilistic rather than deterministic. The present invention is configured to handle such uncertainty by assigning a confidence level to each probabilistic sub-query. In a specific embodiment of the invention, the confidence level may be assigned using a probability mass table.

This section of BASU discloses the expansion of a query into sub-queries, where a probability mass table is used to assign a confidence level, that represents a probability of relevance (see paragraph 0038), to each expanded probabilistic sub-query. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose or even suggest the receipt of a search query comprising multiple search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with one of the search terms of the search query, or broadening the one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 37.

At paragraph 0043, BASU discloses:

The query expansion operation 304 may be defined by the user or developed by the system through user interaction. It is contemplated that query to sub-query expansion may be one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, or many-to-many. Referring now to FIG. 4, an example of a many-to-many query expansion process is shown. The query "outdoor" 402 is shown expanded to sub-queries "trees" 404 and "sky" 406, and the query "beach" 408 is mapped to sub-queries "sky" 406 and "sand" 410. Thus, queries may be expanded to a common sub-query while also being expanded to distinct sub-queries.

This section of BASU merely discloses the use of a query expansion operation 304 to expand a textual query from one or more sub-queries, and further provides a specific example of the expansion of the query "outdoor" 402 to sub-queries "trees" 404 and "sky" 406. This section of

BASU, however, does not disclose or even suggest the receipt of a search query comprising multiple search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with one of the search terms of the search query, or broadening the one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 37.

Since BASU does not disclose or suggest each and every feature of claim 37, BASU cannot anticipate claim 37. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Claims 38 and 40-47 depend from claim 37 and, therefore, are not anticipated by BASU for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 37. Moreover, these claims recite additional features not disclosed or suggested by BASU.

For example, claim 38 recites that the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened. BASU does not disclose or suggest this feature. The Office Action (pg. 3) relies on paragraph 0038 of BASU for allegedly disclosing the above-noted feature of claim 38. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of BASU.

At paragraph 0038, BASU discloses:

As mentioned above, the query system 108 of the present invention is adaptive. Specifically, the system 108 includes an adaptation module 212 that attempts to refine the search results as queries are repeated over time. The adaptation module 212 is capable of modifying the query expansion module 204, the sub-query processing module 206, and the merging module 208 according to user and system feedback. For example, if a user indicates that the sub-query term "smoke" is not relevant in a "rocket launch" query, the adaptation module 212 may

adaptively assign a lower probability of relevance to the "smoke" sub-query in future iterations of "rocket launch" queries. In other words, the adaptation module 212 modifies the query expansion module 204 so that the term "smoke" is assigned a lower confidence level in a "rocket launch" query. The parametric learning techniques of the adaptation module 212 may use a generative approach, including, but not limited to, probabilistic models and graphical probabilistic models and/or a discriminant approach, including, but not limited to, kernel machines, such as support vector machines and neural networks. The adaptation process of the system 108 is discussed in greater detail below.

This section of BASU merely discloses the use of parametric learning techniques for assigning probabilities of relevance to sub-query terms that have been expanded from a given textual query. Thus, a first sub-query expanded from a textual query that is more relevant to that query will have a higher probability of relevance assigned to it then a second sub-query expanded from the textual query. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, a search query comprising a plurality of search terms that is received from a user, where the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with one of the search terms that indicates that the one of the search terms should not be broadened, as recited in claim 38. Claim 38, therefore, is not anticipated by BASU for at least the additional reasons set forth above.

Claims 46 and 47 recite other features not disclosed or suggested by BASU. For example, claim 46 recites that the at least one user-selected operator comprises a plurality of operators and where the plurality of operators comprise a same operator repeated multiple times. The Office Action (pg. 5) relies on paragraph 0033 of BASU for allegedly disclosing this feature. This section of BASU, or any other section for that matter, does not disclose or suggest the above-noted feature of claim 46.

At paragraph 0033, BASU discloses:

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> A query may be subjective or objective. For example, the query "sunset" refers to the setting of the sun and, hence, is an abstract objective query. On the other hand, the query "beautiful evening" is termed as an abstract subjective query in so far as it is based on the user's subjective interpretations of what constitutes a beautiful evening. It is contemplated that the present invention can search both objective and subjective queries. Although subjective queries are by nature particular to the user, the query system 108 is able to learn the user's preferences though user feedback, thereby adapting the search results to the user's definition of subjective concepts.

This section of BASU merely discloses that the system may execute a search using both objective queries and subjective queries, where a subjective query is based on the user's subjective interpretations of given search terms. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, a user-selected operator that comprises multiple operators, where the multiple operators comprise a same operator repeated multiple times, as recited in claim 46. Claim 46, therefore, is not anticipated by BASU for at least the additional reasons set forth above.

Claim 47 recites broadening one of the search terms of a search query to an extent determined by a number of times a same operator is repeated in the at least one user-selected operator. The Office Action (pg. 6) relies on paragraphs 0033 and 0038, which have been reproduced above, for allegedly disclosing this feature. As discussed above, paragraph 0033 merely discloses the execution of a search using both objective queries and subjective queries, where a subjective query is based on the user's subjective interpretations of given search terms. As further discussed above, paragraph 0038 merely discloses the use of parametric learning techniques for assigning probabilities of relevance to sub-query terms that have been expanded from a given textual query. Paragraphs 0033 and 0038, or any other sections of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest broadening one of the search terms of a search query to an

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extent determined by a number of times a same operator is repeated in the at least one user-selected operator, as recited in claim 47. Claim 47, therefore, is not anticipated by BASU for at least the additional reasons set forth above.

Independent claim 39 recites a method that includes receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms; broadening one of the plurality of search terms; excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query; executing a search based on the search query to provide search results; and evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions. In rejecting claim 39, the Office Action (pg. 4) relies on paragraphs 0043 and 0004 of BASU for allegedly disclosing the above-noted features of claim 39. Applicants submit that the cited sections of BASU, or any other section of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest, among other features, excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query, executing a search based on the search query to provide search results and evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions, as recited in claim 39.

Paragraph 0043 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, this section of BASU merely discloses the use of a query expansion operation 304 to expand a textual query from one or more sub-queries, and further provides a specific example of the expansion of the query "outdoor" 402 to sub-queries "trees" 404 and "sky" 406. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest or have anything to do with, excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query, executing a search based on the search query to provide search results and evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions, as recited in claim 39.

At paragraph 0004, BASU discloses:

> Another search strategy is the use of document classification. In this approach,
> documents are first classified using a document classification algorithm.
> Infrequent terms found in the document class are considered similar and are
> clustered in the same term class, referred to as a thesaurus class. The indexing of
> documents and queries is enhanced either by replacing a term by a thesaurus class
> or by adding a thesaurus class to the index data. However, the retrieval
> effectiveness depends strongly on some parameters that are often difficult to
> determine. See, for example, C. J. Crouch, B. Young, Experiments in Automatic
> Statistical Thesaurus Construction, SIGIR'92, 15th Int. ACM/SIGIR Conf. on R
> & D in Information Retrieval, Copenhagen, Denmark, pp. 77-87, June 1992.
> Furthermore, commercial databases typically contain millions of documents and
> are highly dynamic. Often the number of documents is much larger than the
> number of terms in the database. Consequently, document classification is much
> more expensive and has to be done more frequently than the simple term
> classification mentioned above.

This section of BASU discloses the classification of documents using a document classification

algorithm where infrequent terms found in a document class are considered similar and are

clustered in a same class in a similarity thesaurus. Documents and queries may then be indexed

by replacing a given term from the documents or queries by terms clustered in a thesaurus class.

This section of BASU, thus, discloses the clustering of similar terms in a similarity thesaurus and

indexing documents and queries using terms from the documents and the queries and from the

similarity thesaurus. This section of BASU does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do

with, excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query,

executing a search based on the search query to provide search results and evaluating the search

results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions, as recited

in claim 39.

Since BASU does not disclose each and every feature of claim 39, BASU cannot

anticipate claim 39. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 39 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Independent claim 48 recites a method that includes receiving a first search query comprising a plurality of terms; excluding a first term of the plurality of terms from the first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results. BASU does not disclose or suggest this combination of features. The Office Action (pg. 6) relies on paragraphs 0032, 0034, 0035, 0036, 0037 and 0038 for allegedly disclosing the above-noted features of claim 48. Applicants submit that the cited sections of BASU, or any other section of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest, among other features, excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

Paragraph 0032 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, this section of BASU merely discloses the receipt of a search query at a query module 202, where the search query may include a textual query and/or a content query. The textual query may include words, phrases and sentences. The content query may include a music clip, a digital photograph, a movie video, etc.

At paragraph 0034, BASU discloses:

> Once a query is submitted to the query module 202, it is then probabilistically expanded into sub-queries by the query expansion module 204. Query expansion refers to the process of generating multiple sub-queries based on the issued query. A simple example of query expansion is the extension of the query term "rocket launch" into components such as "rocket", "explosion", "smoke cloud", and so on. The present invention utilizes various textual query expansion methods known to those skilled in the art, such as WordNet(r), to expand abstract queries into abstract sub-queries. WordNet is a registered trademark of the Trustees of Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. In addition, content query expansion methods known to those skilled in the art, such as MediaNet, VisualSEEk, and QBIC(r), are utilized to expand content queries into content sub-queries. QBIC is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation, Armonk, N.Y.

This section of BASU discloses the use of a query module 202 for probabilistically expanding a query into multiple sub-queries based on various textual query expansion methods. This section provides one example of query expansion where query term "rocket launch" is expanded into the sub-queries "rocket," "explosion," and "smoke cloud." This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

At paragraph 0035, BASU discloses:

> After the sub-queries are generated, a sub-query processing module 206 receives the sub-queries from the query expansion module 204. In one embodiment of the invention, the processing module 206 translates the sub-queries into different data forms. Translating a sub-query involves mapping the sub-query into other representations. Thus, a context sub-query may be translated into an abstract sub-query by the processing module 206. For example, an image of a sunset can be mapped to the word "sunset" using known image analysis techniques. In addition,

abstract-to-context translation may also be performed. For instance, the processing module 206 may provide an image of a sunset in response to the text sub-query "sunset" using a table look-up. In another embodiment of the invention, abstract-to-abstract exemplar translation is performed. For example, the word "Mercedes" is translated to the word "car". Likewise, the processing module 206 may perform context-to-context exemplar translation. For example, the processing module 206 may analyze an audio clip of the word "sunset" and generate an image of a sunset. It should be noted that sub-query translation can be configured by the user and/or system, and may not necessarily be performed in every query.

This section of BASU discloses the translation of sub-queries, expanded from a query, into different data forms by mapping the sub-queries into the different data forms. For example, an image of a sunset can be mapped to the word "sunset" using image analysis. As another example, the word "Mercedes" can be mapped to the word "car." This section of BASU, thus, merely discloses the translation of a sub-query into different data forms. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

At paragraph 0036, BASU discloses:

The processing module 206 is also used to retrieve sub-query results from the database. Retrieval of query results involves comparing the sub-query with target records in the database. If data contained in a target record matches the specifications in a sub-query, the target record is retrieved from the database as a sub-query result. Furthermore, the processing module 206 may be configured to analyze only a subset of the information contained in each target record. For example, the processing module 206 may analyze only the first one hundred words of a document or every tenth frame of a video sequence.

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This section of BASU discloses the retrieval of search results from a database using sub-queries from an expanded query. If data contained in a record in the database matches one of the sub-queries, the record is retrieved as a search result. This section of BASU, thus, discloses the retrieval of search results from a database using sub-queries expanded from a query. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

At paragraph 0037, BASU discloses:

After the sub-query processing module 206 obtains the sub-query search results for the numerous sub-queries, the merging module 208 combines the intermediate results into a unified search result 210. During this process, the merging module 208 may normalize the sub-query results so that the user can more meaningfully evaluate and compare the retrieved data. For example, in a keyword frequency search, the merging module may divide the number of keyword occurrences by the document length, thereby normalizing large and small documents containing the same keyword. Thus, a normalizing operation is necessary at times to bring different types of results at par with one another.

This section of BASU discloses obtaining search results for each sub-query of multiple sub-queries and combining all of the results into a unified search result that can be presented to a user. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and

executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

Paragraph 0038 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, paragraph 0038 merely discloses the use of parametric learning techniques for assigning probabilities of relevance to sub-query terms that have been expanded from a given textual query. This section of BASU, therefore, does not disclose excluding a first term of a plurality of terms from a first search query to produce a second search query; executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results; mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term; and executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results, as recited in claim 48.

Since BASU does not disclose each and every feature of claim 48, BASU cannot anticipate claim 48. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 48 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Amended independent claim 49 recites a method that includes receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one first symbol which defines a user-assigned strength of broadening associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query; broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query; and executing a search based on the broadened search query. In rejecting claim 49, the Office Action (pgs. 6-7) relies on paragraph 0038 for allegedly disclosing the above-noted features of claim 48. Applicants submit that the cited section of BASU, or any other section of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest, among other features, receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query includes at least one first symbol which

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defines a user-assigned strength of broadening associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query; broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query, as recited in claim 49.

Paragraph 0038 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, this section of BASU merely discloses the use of parametric learning techniques for assigning probabilities of relevance to sub-query terms that have been expanded from a given textual query. Thus, a first sub-query expanded from a textual query that is more relevant to that query will have a higher probability of relevance assigned to it then a second sub-query expanded from the textual query. This section of BASU, however, does not disclose or suggest receiving a search query from a user that includes multiple search terms and at least one symbol which defines a user-assigned strength of broadening associated with one of the search terms of the search query, as recited in claim 49. This section of BASU further does not disclose or suggest broadening the one of the search terms associated with the at least one symbol to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength, as also recited in claim 49.

Since BASU does not disclose each and every feature of claim 49, BASU cannot anticipate claim 49. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 49 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Claims 50-57 depend from claim 49 and, therefore, are not anticipated by BASU for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 39. These claims recite additional features not disclose or suggested by BASU.

For example, claim 50 recites that the at least one first symbol of claim 49 includes multiple symbols, where a number of the multiple symbols determine the extent to which the first one of the search terms is broadened. The Office Action (pg. 7) relies on paragraphs 0038

and 0041 of BASU for disclosing the features of claim 50. Applicants submit that these sections of BASU, or any other sections of BASU for that matter, do not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of claim 50.

Paragraph 0038 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, paragraph 0038 merely discloses the use of parametric learning techniques for assigning probabilities of relevance to sub-query terms that have been expanded from a given textual query. This section of BASU does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, a search query that includes multiple symbols associated with one of the search terms of the search query, where the number of the multiple symbols determine the extent to which the one of the search terms is broadened, as recited in claim 50.

Paragraph 0041 has been reproduced above. As discussed above, this section of BASU merely discloses the expansion of a query into sub-queries, where a probability mass table is used to assign a confidence level, that represents a probability of relevance (see paragraph 0038), to each probabilistic sub-query. This section of BASU does not disclose, suggest, or have anything to do with, a search query that includes multiple symbols associated with one of the search terms of the search query, where the number of the multiple symbols determine the extent to which the one of the search terms is broadened, as recited in claim 50. Claim 50, therefore, is not anticipated by BASU for at least these additional reasons.

Claim 51 recites features similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 38. Claim 51, therefore, is not anticipated by BASU for similar reasons to those set forth above with respect to claim 38.

New claims 58-62 depend from claim 37 and are not anticipated for at least the reasons

set forth above with respect to claim 37. These claims recite additional features not disclosed or suggested by BASU. For example, claim 58 recites that the at least one user-selected operator comprises a first symbol that represents search term broadening that is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Furthermore, claim 59 recites that the first symbol comprises one of a graphical or character symbol, which is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Additionally, claim 60 recites that the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened and where the user-selected delimiter comprises a second symbol that is different than the first symbol, that is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Also, claim 61 recites that the at least one user-selected operator comprises a plurality of operators and where the plurality of operators comprise the first symbol repeated multiple times, that is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Further, claim 62 recites broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of times the first symbol is repeated, that is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Claims 58-62, therefore, are not anticipated by BASU for at least these additional reasons.

New claims 63 and 64 depend from claim 49 and are not anticipated for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 49. These claims recite additional features not disclose or suggested by BASU. For example, claim 63 recites that the first symbol comprises one of a graphical or character symbol, which is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Furthermore, claim 64 recites that the user-selected delimiter comprises a second symbol that is different than the first symbol, which is not disclosed or suggested by BASU. Claims 63 and 64, therefore, are not anticipated by BASU for at least these additional reasons.

New claims 65-76 recite similar features to (though possibly having different scope than) the features of claims 37-47 and 58-62. Claims 65-76, therefore, are not anticipated by BASU for similar reasons to those set forth above with respect to claims 37-47 and 58-62.

As Applicants' remarks with respect to the Examiner's rejections are sufficient to overcome these rejections, Applicants' silence as to assertions by the Examiner in the Office Action or certain requirements that may be applicable to such rejections (e.g., whether a reference constitutes prior art, assertions as to dependent claims, etc.) is not a concession by Applicants that such assertions are accurate or such requirements have been met, and Applicants reserve the right to analyze and dispute such assertions/requirements in the future.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims. To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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